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**January Newsletter
Welcome to 2017**

Nearly 10% of 2017 has flown past. Where did it go?

Summer and the Festive Season can be – and theoretically should be - joyful and relaxing, but, life being what it is – unpredictable and imperfect – festivities and holidays can end up being very disappointing. All of us are sometimes confronted with surprises and additional stress when we least expect them.

The beginning of the year is a time for renewal – a new year – a new perspective. Just smelling the roses – literally – is a reminder of the wider universe, that however difficult our own challenges, perseverance and patience are often very good strategies. A break from routine – even for a very short time, or special treats, however small, can help to iron out the soul.

As a very wise person once wrote:

Not that long ago, I felt like I wasn't *actually* living my true life purpose, but sometimes massive shifts can happen really quickly. Sometimes your entire life purpose can click into place in an instant. And sometimes you have to trust your heart (and the universe) will lead you where you need to go....

We have been fortunate to secure the Multipurpose Room for meetings throughout 2017. This is the room we met in for our September meeting when Dr Stafrace spoke to us. The Multipurpose Room can be approached from Argyle Street by continuing along the path which led to our previous room, but instead of turning left, continuing to the end of the path (ie past the building where we used to meet.) Alternatively, the Multipurpose Room can also be easily accessed via the parking area at the southern end of Betty Day Centre, ie at the end of Bath Street. Bath Street opens from Inkerman Street.

The Committee and I look forward to you joining us on Tuesday 14 February for a joyful and thoughtful evening of fun and ideas with Heidi Everett and with Robbie Berman, a wonderful pianist.

I first learned of Heidi via last year's My Big Idea Contest in which her idea for Mental Health Healing

Centres was short listed by the judges.
<http://www.mybigidea.org.au/ideas/mental-health-healing-centres>

'Resourceful, nature-based, respectful peer-run safe spaces where people with mental illness can go to heal from emotional stress, before escalating into medical crisis

Healing centres throughout Australia built and managed with lived-experience care and wisdom.'

It's a great pity that our politicians are too busy to implement her ideas.

Heidi's experiences through the mental health system have led to her expressing much wisdom. As her website states: Mental Health First Aid is 'HELP'

H – Just say 'Hi'

E – ask 'is Everything OK'

L – Listen

P – Persist

..AND if you are concerned make sure to tell someone YOU respect'

.... I am sure we can all learn a lot from Heidi while also enjoying her artistry.

We also have a marvellous mystery pianist joining us But at this stage I won't write more about him and you will need to join us to find out more. The one thing I can say is that he is a wonderful artist much admired not only by me but my professionally trained friend.

**MONTHLY MEETING
7.30 pm TUESDAY 14 FEBRUARY**

MULTIPURPOSE ROOM

Betty Day Centre, 67 Argyle Street, St Kilda
Access via carpark at end of Bath St (off Inkerman St) or
via southern end of path from Argyle St

Guest: HEIDI EVERETT
speaker on lived experience and recovery, mental health recovery advocate, musician and artist

And we are privileged to also have as our guest

Guest: ROBBIE BERMAN
Pianist and composer

**SECOND PSYCHIATRIC OPINION SERVICE
(SPOS) INFORMATION SESSION**

Wednesday 8 February, 11am-12pm

VMIAC, 1/22 Aintree Street, Brunswick East, VIC 3057
Ph: 9380 3900

The SPOS was established in 2016 and is intended to provide an accessible, supportive and timely service for entitled people to obtain a second psychiatric opinion.

Presented by A/Prof Ruth Vine (Executive Director, NWMH) and Gilles Terrière, RPN (Clinical Coordinator, SPOS) this session is designed to help you to learn more about SPOS and how it can benefit consumers, how the service operates, and to hear about the team's experiences so far.

MIND

For those of you needing some time out, MIND has some wonderful respites on offer. For example – and these are only a few of what's available:

Four Day Respite and Recreation

Clients

13-16 February 2017 – Queenscliff
6-9 March 2017 – King Valley (youth only)
27-30 March 2017 – Wattle Point
15-18 May 2017 – Hepburn Springs
13-16 June 2017 – Queenscliff

Families and Children

10 April – 13 April 2017 - Phillip Island

Carers

1-4 May 2017 – Hepburn Springs

Family and Carer BBQs

22 March 2017 – Wilson Botanic Garden Berwick
28 June 2017 – Black Rock Bowling Club

Day Outings

24 January 2017 - Yarra Cruise
23 February 2017 – Werribee Zoo
23 March 2017 – Peninsula Hot Springs
27 April 2017 – CERES Environmental Park
24 May 2017 – Op Shops
22 June 2017 – Imax Cinema

For further information, phone MIND 1300 286 463
or refer to <https://www.mindaustralia.org.au/>

Mind offers a range of family and carer services for those supporting a friend or loved one living with mental ill-health. These include:

Mind Carer Helpline - 1300 554 660 - free confidential support, advice and advocacy

Support groups - Groups provide an opportunity for family, friends and carers to connect with peers who have similar experiences and to learn current ideas and practices in the field

Carer education - Carer education supports across a continuum of caring and recovery for families and carers. This extends from building carer resilience through to recovery and hope.

Carer counselling - Face-to-face counselling is available to carers in need of support.

Mind Carers Forum - The Mind Carers Forum on the Mind website is an Australian service for families, friends and carers of someone living with mental ill-health. It provides a safe, anonymous online

Mind Recovery College™ 2017 course guide

<http://us5.campaign-archive1.com/?u=646425eecece01749b963997&id=d606df715f&e=514587a075>

Enrol in a course today and learn about mental health and life skills that help you build a more positive, connected and meaningful life. Courses are led by people who have been on their own recovery journeys. Courses are designed for everyone; including people experiencing mental ill health, family members, carers or professionals looking for new understanding and insights into themselves and others. For further information, visit the [Mind Recovery College website](#) or call on Ph: 8698 4060.

**TWO EXCELLENT FREE WORKSHOPS RELATING TO
BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER (BPD)**

Learn about Borderline Personality Disorder

6.30pm – 9.00pm, Tuesdays February 7, 14, 21, 28.
Spectrum Group Room, 4 Bona St, Ringwood East

Spectrum is offering free places designed for friends and families of someone with BPD. This is an opportunity to learn about BPD and how to best support the person with BPD whilst still caring for yourself. This group will explore a number of education and practical approaches to learning new skills in the context of a safe environment amongst other carers. The presenters, Rita Brown and Peter Fairbanks are highly skilled, with long-term experience in this field.

It is expected that you attend all four sessions
<http://www.carersouth.org.au/assets/Friday-EXTRA-December-2016/Spectrum-BPD-workshop-for-families.pdf>
For further information: contact Rita Brown on (03) 8803 3050 or email rita.brown@easternhealth.org.au

For Registration (which is essential, though free)
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/learning-about-borderline-personality-disorder-tickets-30339949606>

2-day Workshop ...Fostering Realistic Hope for Carer Families/Partners supporting a Family Member with Borderline Personality Disorder: Fri 21 and Sat 22 April 2017

Contact The Bouverie Centre, 8 Gardiner St, Brunswick, to register your interest or referral (03) 9385 5100

The workshop will be facilitated by Peter McKenzie .The supportive group process with a therapeutic focus aims to:

- Invite participants to share and respond to stories of living with BPD and the effects it has on their lives & relationships
- Explore-evaluate participants' and professional knowledge and practices that foster realistic ways to support relationships and promote initiatives that work with the effects of BPD on families.

CALLING ALL MEN! A new choir program for men – MEN ALOUD.

Jonathon Welch, the founder of the School of Hard Knocks choir posted the following on Facebook... "CALLING ALL MEN! I created the School of Hard Knocks new choir program for men – MEN ALOUD. 191 men took their lives in the last month in Australia – we have to work together to stop this tsunami of suicides and what better way than through music. MEN ALOUD rehearsals start in February 2017 in a supportive and fun environment for men where they can just be, singing and talking – without judgement."

For more information email jan.hamilton@schoolofhardknocks.org.au

PLEASE SHARE THIS POST.

Support Program: Buried in Treasures??

This is a group work program run by EACH for people who have issues with hoarding and clutter. Would you like to learn tips on how to de-clutter? Each week the group facilitators will either introduce a new skill from the book, Buried in Treasures, or discuss a topic that is important and interesting to the group. They will also check in with you about individual progress, challenges, goals and successes.

The next group will start on Thursday 2 February
Weekly sessions 1.00 – 3.00 p.m. till 15 June
at EACH office, 5/66 Victor Cres, Narre Warren
The useful book to be purchased costs \$25.

<http://www.carersouth.org.au/assets/Friday-EXTRA-21-October/BIT-flyer-South-East-term-1-2017.pdf>

Article from The Conversation: Drug rehab and group therapy: Do they work?

Julaine Allan, Charles Sturt University

Thousands of Australians go to residential drug and alcohol rehab programs every year. But is there evidence rehabs, as well as the group therapy they often rely on, actually work?

https://theconversation.com/drug-rehab-and-group-therapy-do-they-work-65413?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=The%20Weekend%20Conversation%20-%206120&utm_content=The%20Weekend%20Conversation%20-%206120+CID_2da4b074cf57c24b4242754a0799f9e9&utm_source=campaign_monitor&utm_term=Drug%20rehab%20and%20group%20therapy%20do%20they%20work

...The article appeared in The Conversation. It is not a scientific peer reviewed article, but it raises some interesting issues. According to one source, 'a study from Scotland found three years after treatment of any kind, 58% of people are no longer substance dependant. So treatment works for about two thirds of people, eventually.'

WATCH THIS SPACE!!! COALITION PROMISED TO INVEST \$192 M TO STRENGTHEN MENTAL HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA

....but don't hold your breath???

<https://www.liberal.org.au/coalitions-policy-strengthen-mental-health-care-australia>

COUNCILS, LIBRARIES, U3A, COUNCIL OF ADULT EDUCATION (CAE), MeetUp

.....look on their websites for interesting courses and activities – eg

<http://www.cae.edu.au/>

<http://www.u3a.org.au/> ... U3A has lots of different locations, some of which are bound to suit.

<https://www.meetup.com/en-AU/>

MeetUps are another way of meeting interesting individuals with whom you may have shared interests. The diversity of locations and interests catered for in MeetUp is immense. I have done a couple of fabulous photography classes and one, when my ski buddies were busy and the snow was falling, I tried cross country with a MeetUp group. It was a great learning experience – never ever to cross country ski ever again. Not because the group was bad, or the people were

not nice, but because I am totally unco on thin skis. I returned very bruised physically and with my ego seriously shattered, but I know I did provide excellent entertainment =for the younger set who made up most of the group. I commend the idea of MeetUp and a number of my friends have enjoyed the activities. They suit all age groups, but the two activities I joined were mostly among the younger set, so consumers may also find fun things to do.

<http://www.artsaccess.com.au>

Arts Access is an organization which often provides very good opportunities to individuals with a disability and their carers to attend performances at vastly reduced rates. See website for further details.

COPMI Children of Parents with a Mental Illness resource materials: scroll down and you will see all the materials that can be ordered

<http://www.copmi.net.au/get-info/copmi-publications.html>

NSW Family and Community Services: Dual Diagnosis Resources order form is on the bottom of the page:

http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docs_menu/about_us/news_and_publications/dual_diagnosis_resources.html

<https://askizzy.org.au/>

Is a wonderful website. I thank our member who referred me to it. The site references an enormous range of resources. It is constantly being improved, especially its mental health aspect, so please complete the feedback form on the website.

<http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/>

The Office of The Public Advocate has a great deal of useful information on its site. Both the web resource and the office staff are very helpful. I have done a day session on the various types of Powers of Attorney – something which we all need to know about and keep abreast of ever-changing legislation. These things are all a bit like insurance....you don't need it till you need it and because you don't need it till you need it, it all gets forgotten and put in the 'to do' basket. However when you do need it it's got to be done correctly or nasty brown material tends to splatter on us from the air conditioning.

Of course the best website is:

Our ISFAF Webpage

<http://ispaf.org/>

Drop down menus across the top of the page lead to many very useful contacts and sites.

Judith Rafferty works very hard to update our website, but she does this all alone. I haven't the slightest idea of how to change it and my hunch is that none of the

committee has anywhere near Judith's knowledge. Sometimes she could do with a hand. If we have some budding web maintenance folk amongst us, please contact me.

Without Judith we would not be able to function. She runs the office with the most amazing proficiency, efficiency and dedication.

Without Judith and Edwina you would not be reading this Newsletter or any other mail-out.

We need to thank all members of our committee, because without them, Team ISFAF would not function, but special thanks go to Judith and Edwina who are the silent members of our team and without whom we would be lost.

We have an opportunity monthly to discuss matters of interest with Fran Fisher and Anthony Kennedy who head Alfred Psychiatry's two outpatient clinics. We also have a similar opportunity quarterly with Dr Stafrace and Sandra Keppich-Arnold who head the medical and nursing in the in-patient unit. The monthly meetings are generally held on the third Thursday of the month and the quarterly on the first Wednesday, commencing March 1st. If you have matters you wish me to raise, please contact me directly. Strict confidence is assured.

Our February 14 programme sounds as though sharing St Valentine's Day will be intellectually stimulating and lots of fun. When I heard Robbie playing, I happened coincidentally to be with a friend who is a trained pianist. Her jaw dropped in admiration for his true artistry.

See you on the 14th in the Multipurpose Room,

***Warm Regards,
Judi Burstyner, Convenor***

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